

Dog Breeding & Showing



Volunteers for the environment

By James Aucoin

When more than 100 oil-soaked loons were washed ashore last year after the sinking of a coal vessel, environmental volunteers were ready. The loons, their black and white plumage covered with heavy oil, were sent to several rehabilitation centers.

Twenty-eight were taken to Tri-State Bird Rescue and Research, Inc., a bird "hospital" in the basement of the Delaware Audubon Society. After careful, repeated scrubbing and tender nursing by the Tri-State staff and volunteers, 14 of the 28 injured birds survived—a phenomenal success rate compared to other attempts to save oiled birds.

"My heart is very much in Tri-State," says Helen Kubico, a retired high school chemistry teacher and one of the more than 100 volunteers at the center. "I really like handling the birds and being close to them."

Kubico, a self-avowed nature lover who likes to snorkel so she can see fish "eyeball to eyeball," also helped Tri-State last year in the halls of the Delaware state capitol, where she and other activists successfully lobbied the legislators for the center's first state grant-in-aid.

Tri-State, like many other environmental groups, depends on volunteers like Kubico. Committed to working eight hours a month at the center, she often is drawn into much longer hours, many times double-checking on the injured, sick or orphaned birds she cares for.

Like others, Kubico discovered environmental activism in her retire-



Retired teacher Helen Kubico, a volunteer at the Tri-State Bird Rescue and Research facility, ministers to wounded birds and lobbies Delaware State legislators.

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